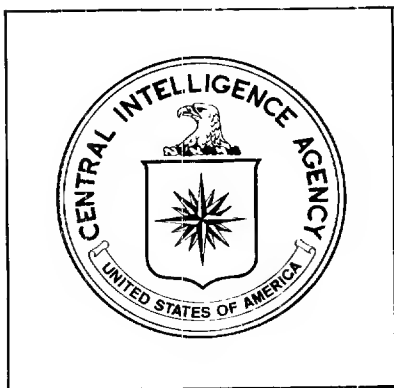


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MIDDLE EAST - AFRICA - SOUTH ASIA

This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the Middle East - Africa Division, Office of Current Intelligence, with occasional contributions from other offices within the Directorate of Intelligence. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

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Israel

New Cabinet Minister

The appointment this week of Zvulun Hammer as Israeli Minister of Social Welfare will strengthen hardliners in Prime Minister Rabin's cabinet. It will not, however, appreciably alter the government's negotiating strategy as determined by Rabin, Defense Minister Peres, and Foreign Minister Allon.

Hammer, at age 39 the youngest member of Rabin's 20-man cabinet, is a leader of the National Religious Party's hawkish youth wing. He fills a cabinet seat traditionally reserved for the Religious Party in the succession of Labor-dominated coalition governments that have been in power in Israel since its establishment.

Hammer is strongly opposed to any Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank or the Golan Heights. His faction is closely affiliated with one of the most vocal and active of the various Israeli groups currently pressing to increase the number of Jewish settlements on the Golan. The faction has come out publicly against any Israeli withdrawal from the Golan as part of an interim agreement with Syria.

Hammer recently told reporters he intends to work from within the government against any withdrawal from the Golan. He implied he will try to constrain his two fellow Religious Party ministers by threatening to reveal to their constituents what they say in cabinet discussions if their statements deviate from the Party's conservative principles. Both these ministers generally support Rabin's conduct of the negotiations but Hammer's presence in the cabinet might induce them to adopt a more cautious position.

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Both Rabin and the old-guard Religious Party leaders nevertheless support Hammer's entry into the government. Rabin hopes to dampen criticism from Hammer's faction by bringing it into the cabinet. He also wants to bolster his slim Knesset majority by ensuring the support of all ten Religious Party deputies for his government. The party leadership, in turn, hopes the move will patch over the growing rift between the increasingly powerful youth faction and the party's old guard.
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North Yemen

Effort to Stir Tribal Uprising Fails

A recent effort by Sheikh Abdallah al-Ahmar to generate tribal resistance to Command Council Chairman Ibrahim al-Hamdi appears to have been unsuccessful.



Sheikh Abdallah has been one of the most powerful politicians in North Yemen for several years by virtue of his tribal position [REDACTED]. He has lost much of his influence in recent months, however, as Hamdi has skillfully removed potential opponents from military and government posts. As a traditionalist, al-Ahmar opposed Hamdi because of Hamdi's efforts to modernize North Yemen's society and political system.



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Al-Ahmar has the ability to initiate small-scale uprisings in the northern part of the country. Without unified tribal support and assistance from an outside power [REDACTED] however, North Yemeni officials do not believe he poses a threat to the regime. (SECRET NOFORN/USIB ONLY)

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Pakistan

*Supreme Court Upholds Government's Ban
on Opposition Party*

The Supreme Court has upheld the government's action last February banning the National Awami Party (NAP), the largest opposition party in Pakistan. In its unanimous decision, announced on October 30, the court held that the NAP had been operating in "a manner prejudicial to the sovereignty and integrity" of the nation and therefore had "made itself liable to be dissolved" under the political parties act.

The court also found that the NAP leaders had resorted to acts of terrorism, sabotage and subversion in "an effort to undermine the security, solidarity and sovereignty" of the state.

The court's ruling was not unexpected. The legal case against the NAP has been described as relatively weak, but the government has the power to bring considerable pressure on the justices. While the decision may have been foreordained, the NAP leaders probably hurt their cause by withdrawing their defense attorneys in objection to the proceedings shortly after the trial began. Subsequently, the court-appointed defense lawyer conducted a rather bland defense of the NAP and its leaders.

The NAP has a long history of opposing strong centralized government, but in recent years its leaders, openly at least, have advocated provincial autonomy within Pakistan rather than secession of one or more provinces from the federal state. The party's following has been largely limited to the two provinces adjoining Afghanistan, the Northwest Frontier and Baluchistan. The government in Kabul came under strong attack during the trial, being accused of aiding the NAP in organizing and supporting a rebellion in Baluchistan and of giving aid to terrorists in the Northwest Frontier. Close ties do

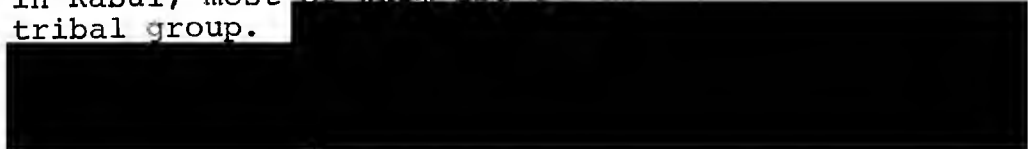
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exist between leaders of the NAP and the authorities in Kabul, most of whom are of the same Pushtun tribal group.



The Bhutto regime's victory in court is not likely to slow its campaign against its opponents in the NAP. The attorney general has indicated that NAP officials may well be disqualified from holding elected office for the next five years as a result of the court ruling. This restriction may apply to those currently holding seats in the national and provincial assemblies. Additionally, the government appears to be determined to go through with the trial of several jailed senior NAP leaders, including party chief Abdul Wali Khan, on criminal charges.

The government's tough attitude may silence the present leadership of the NAP and possibly other opposition politicians. It could also cause a growth of underground opposition in the Northwest Frontier, increased tribal dissidence in Baluchistan, and a sharp revival of the bitter propaganda war between Pakistan and Afghanistan. (CONFIDENTIAL)



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